

Magic Is Might:
Class and Power Dynamics in
the *Harry Potter* Series

Julia Viljanen
Master's Thesis
English Philology
Department of Languages
Faculty of Arts
University of Helsinki
May 2019

Tiedekunta – Fakultet – Faculty Faculty of Arts		Koulutusohjelma – Utbildningsprogram – Degree Programme English Philology
Opintosuunta – Studieriktning – Study Track Literature		
Tekijä – Författare – Author Julia Viljanen		
Työn nimi – Arbetets titel – Title Magic is Might: Class and Power Dynamics in the <i>Harry Potter</i> series		
Työn laji – Arbetets art – Level Master's thesis	Aika – Datum – Month and year May 2019	Sivumäärä – Sidoantal – Number of pages 46
<p>Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract</p> <p>Tämä gradututkielma keskittyy luokkaeroihin ja valta-asetelmiin J.K. Rowlingin <i>Harry Potter</i>-kirjasarjassa. Kyseisiä asetelmia tutkitaan eri kirjallisuusteorioiden kautta. Tutkielman luonteen tähden käsittelen Rowlingin luomaa taikamaailmaa ikään kuin sen yhteiskunnalliset rakenteet olisivat todellisia.</p> <p>Velhojen yhteiskunta on täynnä ennakkoluuloja ja verenperintöön liittyvää syrjintää. Sarjassa on kolme eri verisäätystä; puhdasveriset, puoliveriset ja jästisyntyiset. Jästisyntyiset velhot ja noidat kokevat syrjintää sillä toiset velhot pitävät heidän taikakykyjään heikompina ja heitä kutsutaan kuraverisiksi. Sarjan antagonistti lordi Voldemort on tullut verratuksi Hitleriin ja hänen toimiaan jästisyntyisiä vastaan voidaan verrata joihinkin toisen maailmansodan tapahtumiin.</p> <p>Taikaolennot, kuten kotitontut ovat yhteiskunnan alimpaa kastia. Niiden tärkein funktio on olla hyödyksi velhoille ja noidille ja antaa näiden pysyä taikamaailman hierarkian ylimmällä tasolla. Post-kolonialistista kritiikkiä voidaan käyttää hyödyksi taikaolentojen asemaa tutkiessa. Kotitontut voidaan rinnastaa orjiin ja Potter-kriitikot ovat usein verranneet maahisia kohtaan kohdistuvaa vihaa antisemitismiin.</p> <p>Tylypahkassa lapset lajitellaan neljään eri tupaan, joissa he opiskelevat seitsemän vuotta. Tuvat kisaavat toisiaan vastaan ja luovat asetelman, jossa oppilaita pidetään eriarvoisina. Tämä asetelma jatkuu vielä aikuisuudessa ja työelämässä.</p> <p>Analyysin lopuksi tulen siihen päätelmään että Rowling on osin tiedostaen ja osin tiedostamattaan luonut yhteiskunnan, jonka luokkaerot ovat jopa suuremmat kuin jästi-Britanniassa. Sarjan fantastiset elementit eivät pysty peittämään sen esittämiä ongelmia. Ratkaisuksi valtaeroihin ja luokkataisteluihin Rowling tarjoaa rakkauden voimaa, joka voittaa sarjassa vihan ja pelon.</p>		
Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords J.K. Rowling, Fantasy, Young Adult Fiction		
Säilytyspaikka – Förvaringställe – Where deposited		
Muita tietoja – Övriga uppgifter – Additional information		

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List of Abbreviations

The Philosopher's Stone = PS

The Chamber of Secrets = CoS

The Prisoner of Azkaban = PoA

The Goblet of Fire = GoF

The Order of the Phoenix = OoP

The Half-Blood Prince = HBP

The Deathly Hallows = DH

1. Introduction

1.1. Aims and methods

This thesis analyses the different class and power dynamics in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. *Harry Potter* has become a modern children's classic with over 500 million copies of the novels sold worldwide. The series has been translated into 80 different languages and it has gained positive attention from literary critics. This thesis aims to bring further literary value to the series by offering a critical reading of some of the social issues related to the parallel world that the series is portraying and by showing how these issues are reflected in our own world.

Though the wizarding world is fictional, it is treated in a detailed way in this thesis and for the sake of the analysis its social structures are put through similar analysis one might use when dealing with a real world. I use different literary and social theories to analyse class structures and the power dynamics that are related to them in the wizarding society. I also make comparisons of the magical war and its ideals with the Second World War, as Rowling herself has admitted there are allusions to that time period. It should be noted that though Rowling created a world full of class issues, it is very likely that the series was not entirely meant to be a work of social critique on her side. Rather, some of the class and power dynamics present in the series should be seen more as a direct reflection of the current condition of the British society. The injustices portrayed there are merely easier to question when the reader comes from another sociocultural environment.

1.2. Presentation of author and works

Joanne Rowling, better known by her penname J.K. Rowling, is a British author who created the fantasy series *Harry Potter*. She also has another pseudonym she adopted after moving on to write adult crime fiction, Robert Galbraith. When her work was first published, Rowling was encouraged to adopt a pseudonym by her publisher Bloomsbury, as it was feared that young boys would not enjoy reading novels written by a woman (Rowling Homepage 2019). Therefore she adopted the initial K from her grandmother's name Kathleen, since she had no second name of her own.

Joanne Rowling was born on 31st of July 1965 in Gloucestershire (Kellman and Magill 2009: 2199). Rowling's teenage years were not particularly happy. Her mother suffered from multiple sclerosis (a disease which ultimately took her life) and the diagnosis haunted their home (Rowling Homepage 2019). These early tragedies might be the reason that her main protagonist Harry ends up losing both his parents and the most important father figures early on in his life. The death of Rowling's mother Anne, who died only six months after Rowling began to write the series certainly plays a part in why the series is so involved with the theme of death and overcoming it (Flood 2014). Death is seen in the series as both an enemy to be conquered and an old friend that will take the dying on their great, final adventure. It appears that Rowling used writing as a channel for her mourning.

Rowling married her first husband, the journalist Jorge Arantes whom she met while teaching English in Portugal, in 1992, but the marriage fell apart only a year later, shortly after the birth of their daughter Jessica (Kellman and Magill 2009: 2199). After the divorce, Rowling moved to Edinburgh, where she lived on state benefits. She then began to work on *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and finished it in 1995.

Rowling was rejected by several publishers when she first began submitting the novel. It was considered too long for a children's book, and it took her agent a year until they found Bloomsbury, which accepted the *Philosopher's Stone*. The initial advance for the novel was only £2500 (Kellman and Magill 2009: 2199). The series achieved worldwide popularity and was praised for making children interested in reading at a time when it was thought that their attention was shifting to computer games instead of books (though it has been noted later on that the worldwide reading nevertheless decreased despite of the popularity of the series). As a result of the popularity of *Harry Potter* Rowling became the first billionaire author and she is (after the Queen) the richest woman in the United Kingdom (Watson 2004).

Rowling has been very interested in charity work after gaining her wealth. She is the first person to have lost their billionaire status after having donated so much to charity. She has donated large sums towards multiple sclerosis research to support those suffering from the same illness that her mother died from. Rowling has also established her own charity organization *Lumos* in 2006, which promotes an end to the institutionalisation of children worldwide and aims to close orphanages worldwide by 2050 in favour of directing funds to placing children in families.

Harry Potter is a series of seven novels. The plot revolves around an orphan boy called Harry Potter, who lives with his abusive aunt and uncle who consider themselves to be very normal people. On his eleventh birthday, Harry discovers that he is a wizard. He is famous in the wizarding world, because he defeated a dark wizard called Lord Voldemort when he was only a baby and survived the killing curse, which no one else had done before him. Harry then attends a magical boarding school called Hogwarts and readers get to follow his journey to adulthood as he struggles to fit into the magical society and as he prepares to defeat Voldemort who rises from death for one final time. Harry is sorted into the House of Gryffindor, one of the four houses in Hogwarts. The overwhelming characteristic of that house is bravery, which foregrounds the future struggles where that quality will be of use to him.

Harry goes to Hogwarts for six years and at the end of each year he faces a villain, which is most often an incarnation of his arch nemesis Voldemort. While studying at Hogwarts he gets to know the wizarding world especially through his pure-blood friend Ron Weasley and his family, with whom he spends most of the school holidays. Harry finds out that while the wizarding world is magical it still has its problems and some people and creatures in it are considered inferior than others. By his sixth year it is revealed that Voldemort has survived death because he created seven horcruxes, objects enchanted with dark magic that contain a piece of their owner's soul and allow them to lengthen their life as long as there is even one horcrux left when they die. Some of the horcruxes have already been destroyed by Harry and Headmaster Dumbledore at that point. In order to destroy them all, Harry and his friends Ron and Hermione miss their last year at school to embark on a journey to find the remaining horcruxes. Meanwhile Voldemort takes over the Ministry of Magic and Hogwarts and begins reforms that take away the rights of Muggleborn wizards. The final horcrux turns out to be Harry himself and therefore he must face death and allow the piece of Voldemort's soul that is inside him die before he can defeat Voldemort. The first two novels read as children's fiction, while the later ones are aimed for an older, young adult audience and get gradually darker in tone. The series was designed so that the original readers would grow up along with Harry.

After finishing writing *Harry Potter*, Rowling has ventured towards fiction aimed for adults. In 2012, five years after the final Potter novel was published she published her novel *Casual Vacancy*. Rowling is currently working on her *Cormoran Strike* crime series, which revolves around a private detective in London. She writes the series under the pseudonym Robert Galbraith. The first two novels of the series have been adapted into a television series for BBC One in 2017 (Rowling Homepage 2019).

Rowling has received many awards for both her writing and her charity work, including the Hans Christian Andersen Award, known as the Nobel prize for children's literature, and Order of the British Empire in 2001 (Rowling Homepage 2019).

1.3. Brief theoretical background

This section gives a brief overview of the main literary theories used in this thesis.

1.3.1. Postcolonialism and the Other

According to David Boje (2001: 35), *grand narrative* is a term originally coined by Jean-François Lyotard and it refers to the narratives inherent in the society, which are strong enough to marginalize other discourses. Grand narratives or 'metanarratives' can include for example a nuclear family or a certain religion, or the 'American dream'. Luisa Grijalva-Maza (2012: 426) argues that the magical world portrayed in Harry Potter creates a grand narrative of liberal values, yet it does not manage to escape producing discriminatory policies similar to the ones in the real world.

Jacques Derrida on the other hand discusses binary pairs, where one cannot understand a concept without its opposition, such as with 'light' and 'dark' or 'good' and 'evil'. These pairs are hierarchical and the first term is seen as better than the second (Rivkin 2017). The second one out of the binary opposition is the 'Other'. The Other is a concept most prevalently used by Feminist and post-colonial critics. In order for there to be "Other" there must also be an "us". The Other is reflected against this Us and it is always seen as somehow inferior. Throughout history women have been seen as the Other. Similarly, in the Western world Africans and Asians have been the Other. The Other can be of another nationality, gender, religion or any other side of a binary pair. In the world of *Harry Potter* one of the main binary pairs is Muggles and wizards, with Muggles being the Other. Grijalva-Maza (2012:426) claims that this process of Othering ends up reproducing a colonialist discourse in the series. According to Grijalva-Maza (2012: 427), it is the desire for "an absolute transcendental [magical] identity" that leads into the discrimination against those not in possession of magic being born.

Edward Said wrote a study called *Orientalism* (1978), where he discussed East as the Other and West/Europe as Us (Castle 2006: 137). Postcolonial criticism is a continuum of the discussions that Said began. As the prefix 'post' implies, postcolonialism extends beyond

colonial discourse, focusing not only on the colonial period but the period that follows it. Gregory Castle (2006: 135) claims that postcolonial “refers to the unrepresentable parts in the colonial”, such as legal inequality and contradictions in the colonial order. Some of the main issues that postcolonial critics are interested in include nationalism, the Other and the subject and subjectivity. The wizarding world does not revolve much around nationalism as such, as the only real portrayal of that is the wizards supporting their own country in international Quidditch matches and during the Triwizard Tournament. It could be argued though, that the magical Britain could be seen as a different country from the Muggle Britain despite of them sharing the same land and borders geographically. The liminality of the magical world creates borders and new forms of the Other that would not exist otherwise.

1.3.2. Class

Marxist critics are interested in the concept of class. In the Marxian class theory a human’s place in the class hierarchy is defined by their place in the chain of production. The upper class, also known as the bourgeoisie, own the means of the production and the lower-class workers, the proletariat, have to sell their labour in order to survive.

Great Britain has long been a class society, where there has been a notable divide between the aristocrats and the working class. In the past, servants have worked for nobles and been a quiet part of the households in the grand manors on the British countryside. The remnants of these class distinctions still show in the British society today, especially in the private schools, and therefore focusing on them can be useful for the sake of social analysis. The wizarding society seems to follow the Muggle society and the pure-blood families in the series still live in manors with servants (the house-elves). J.K. Rowling portrays the Dursley family living a middle-class life, which Harry is able to escape from. Hogwarts is indeed more reminiscent of a public school than a state school in its pursuit of magic and the way it takes care of its students.

1.3.3. Power

The Cambridge English Dictionary defines power as ‘ability to control people and events’ and ‘the amount of political control a person or a group has in a country’ (*CED*

2019). Those in possession of power control the society. They are usually part of the upper class.

Clémentine Beauvais (2015: 3) discusses the power balance between adults and children in children's fiction and notes that "the adult agency (...) is not necessarily powerful; the child figure, even when turned into a projector-screen for adult desires, is not automatically deprived of power". She identifies a "temporal otherness" between the adult and the child as they are set apart by existing in different temporalities (Beauvais 2015: 4). *Harry Potter* has several adult figures who are in positions of power over children. This is the case with for example the professors at Hogwarts. Yet the children and teenagers in the novel rebel against the rules set by the adults and in some cases overpower and outwit them.

Feminist critics often connect power with the body. Females can be empowered by deciding how they want to show and use their own body. Slaves do not own their own bodies, but belong to someone else. They might carry brands on their skin, which proves this ownership. In *Harry Potter* the house-elves inflict corporal punishment upon themselves once they disobey their masters. Death Eaters are branded with the Dark Mark once they join Voldemort's inner circle.

There is power in speech. When history is being written, the narrative is created by the ones in power. Therefore the Other loses their voice and their representation is skewed or close to non-existent. According to Sheena Malhotra and Aimee Carillo Rowe (2013: 1), "for an individual or group who is silenced to gain power, they must activate *voice* in order to resist and transform the conditions of their oppression". There are ethical considerations to be made related to who speaks for whom. For instance Kathleen Lundeen (2001: 90) discusses "ventriloquist folklore" that is literature that presumes to speak on behalf of a silenced group even though the author is not a part of that group. This might lead to misrepresentation and harmful stereotypes if authors are not knowledgeable enough about their subject. Therefore there has been discussion among academics about whether it is better to have no representation or to become misrepresented (see Lundeen 2001).

In terms of the power of speech, slurs contain power. Cynthia Wang et al. (2017: 76) define slurs as "words used by outgroup members that highlight a stigmatized group's lower status". Wang et al. (2017: 78) mention the term *self-labeling*, which means using negative terms to refer to oneself, and claim that by practising self-labeling members of a minority group are able to empower themselves and change the term's significance. This has happened with

the term “queer” among the LGBTQ+ community. Self-labeling is considered empowering because it lessens the power that the dominant group has over the minority.

1.3.4. Previous Potter Criticism

In the twenty years since *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was first published, the series has gained the attention of several literary scholars, who have analysed different aspects of it. The series has received a lot of praise and also some criticism.

Jack Zipes (2002: 175-176) argues that the *Harry Potter* books are popular because they are formulaic and conventional, and even though he acknowledges that they are not badly written, they are not especially exceptional works of literature. According to Zipes (2002: 172-174), *Harry Potter* should be treated as phenomenon instead of a normal work of literature. He is right in that the books contain a certain formula, where they begin around the 31st of July, when Harry is miserably celebrating his birthday at the Dursleys and then starts his school year (at the end of which an evil force, most often Voldemort must be faced). However, it is slightly unfair to claim that there is something inherently wrong or exceptional about this arch. Fantasy is known as a genre with several conventions. According to Christopher Booker (2005), there are altogether seven basic plots that can be recognised in all literature. In addition, Vladimir Propp has identified 31 functions in fairy tales, which are closely related to fantasy as a genre. Therefore there is always some form of formula to be found in literature and this alone does not lessen the value of a work.

Feminist critics have been interested in the series and the way it depicts girls and women. Since female empowerment and gender imbalances have been discussed so thoroughly and in detail in previous Potter criticism, this thesis will not focus on them as such. I will, however, provide a brief overview here on some of the most interesting findings that they have made that are linked to the general topic of this thesis. Rivka Kellner (2010: 367) claims that although many of the female characters in *Harry Potter*, such as Hermione Granger and Madam Hooch, are empowered, the society that the series portrays is mainly patriarchal. Kellner (2010: 369) discusses the house-elves and claims that they can be read as an allegory of oppressed women. She claims that since house-elves are depicted as “small emotional beings with high voices” (Kellner 2010: 369), their portrayal is used as a form of social criticism. Rowling is, according to Kellner (2010: 370) ambivalent to feminism and therefore does not face gender issues head on, but instead chooses to (whether that is consciously or not) tackle them through allusions. However, sometimes what is left unmentioned is just as important as what is

mentioned. Meredith Cherland (2008: 276) points out that there is no homosexuality in *Harry Potter*, not even in passing. Cherland (2008: 275-276) also discusses how sexual desire is portrayed with the Veelas that make men mad with want, and how the Veela women are portrayed as sirens and ordinary women, such as Hermione, cannot understand the reactions that men have towards them. This portrayal of lustful men and women with no sexual longing can be seen as something that enforces harmful stereotypes in young readers.

Janet Brennan Croft (2009) points out that, unlike in the real world, there are no gender-based expectations regarding education in the Potterverse and that women seem to be regarded highly as athletes in Quidditch teams. However, she recognises other problems with female representation in the books. Harry and Ron expect Hermione to cook and do healing magic when they are on the run, both which are very stereotypical female activities (Croft 2009). Croft (2009), like Kellner, also mentions the house-elves as a representation of twentieth century house-wives, who form their identity around home-making activities and do not wish to gain liberation from their duties.

Harry Potter caused an uproar among some religious groups when it was first published. They considered the sorcery depicted in the books to be evil and thought that children should not be allowed to read them. Novels were even burned. However, there are literary scholars who have connected *Harry Potter* with religion, mainly Christianity. Shira Weiss (2012) claims that the series evokes ethical principles found in writings of St Augustine and Immanuel Kant. According to Weiss (2012: 191-193), there is no specific doctrine in *Harry Potter*, yet there exists a duality between Voldemort and Harry. As Voldemort creates a religion around himself in pursuit of power, Harry learns that love is the common good that Augustine sees as the love of the eternal and love of God. Weiss (2012: 196, 200) also claims that Voldemort's graveyard resurrection is an inversion of Adam's rib and that he holds his own final supper at the Malfoy manor.

Loris Vezzali et al. (2015) conducted three studies to see how reading *Harry Potter* affected attitudes towards immigrants, homosexuals and refugees among students from three different age groups from elementary school to university. They hypothesised that since the protagonist with whom readers identify meets with stigmatized fantasy group members, this would affect the way that the students themselves might see stigmatized groups in real life (Vezzali et al 2015: 107). Vezzali et al (2015: 115) found that based on the results of their studies contact with fantasy characters can improve attitudes towards dissimilar outgroups.

Harry's friendships across species and different bloodstatuses are therefore able to convey a message of inclusivity.

2. Toujours Pur: Discussing the pure-blood ideology and class in the wizarding society

2.1. Defining blood purity: The Pure-bloods v. Mudbloods

There are three different blood statuses in *Harry Potter*. The pure-bloods, the half-bloods and the Muggle-borns. The first mention of blood purity in the series comes as early as in one of the first chapters of *The Philosopher's Stone (PS)* where Harry meets Draco Malfoy for the first time in the Diagon Alley. Draco is the son of one of the oldest pure-blood families and his father was a known Death Eater (that is, a marked supporter of Voldemort) during Voldemort's first reign. Draco tells Harry that in his opinion Hogwarts should be reserved for old magic families and expresses bafflement over the fact that some Muggle-borns have never even heard about Hogwarts. Since Harry has only recently realised his true identity, the conversation makes him feel uncomfortable. The two boys become enemies at Hogwarts because of their different attitudes on blood purity and Draco's arrogance. This helps with aligning the sympathies of readers with Muggle-borns from the beginning of the story.

As regards the biological causes of magic, it is unclear how magic came to be in the world and what exactly it is that makes wizards and witches able to create it. However, it appears to be genetic since it is hereditary. The exception to this are Muggle-borns who are witches and wizards that are born in families with no previous magical blood. Because of their living circumstances it appears that they most often only get to know about their real identities when they receive their letters from Hogwarts. There are however signs that show that a child is magical from a very young age. All magical children commit accidental magic, which can manifest in different ways. Harry, for example, makes a safety glass disappear in a reptile house and an ugly jumper shrink so that he would not have to wear it to school. The accidental magic is usually realized when something dangerous or distressing is happening to the child. These cases of accidental magic may give the children and their guardians hints that something is different with them, but it is very unlikely that anyone in the 20th century would first suspect a child to be a wizard.

Muggle-born siblings sometimes appear, as in the case of the Creevey brothers Colin and Dennis. Based on the Muggle-born characters that readers get to know during the series it however seems to be more likely that only one witch or a wizard appears in a single family of Muggles. This is the case with Lily and Petunia Evans, Harry's mother and aunt. Lily

is a witch, but Petunia is not, which leads to the eventual rift between them as Petunia will never be able to be a part of Lily's world.

A witch or a wizard is categorized as pure-blood if their family consists entirely of magical blood and has done so for several generations. If a pure-blood and a Muggle-born conceive a child, the child will be a half-blood. The same goes when a child's parents are both half-bloods. One of the oldest pure-blood families in Britain is The Noble and Most Ancient House of Black that Harry's godfather Sirius is a part of. The family has a tapestry in their ancestral home showing their family tree, which can be traced back for centuries. The number of pure-blood families has diminished by time and therefore according to Sirius Black most of the pure-bloods are related to each other in some manner. This led to for example Sirius' parents to marrying their second cousins so as to keep the family line pure.

There is a group of pure-bloods and half-bloods who do not see Muggle-born witches and wizards as their equals and who believe that they have inferior magical qualities. Another wizarding school called Durmstrang does not admit Muggle-borns because of this belief. As the school in question used to be the dark wizard Grindelwald's place of study and supposedly teaches the Dark Arts instead of defence against them, this is not a surprising revelation. Pure-blood fanaticism is most usually connected with the support of the Dark Arts. The discrimination is however not only limited to dark wizards, but is wider spread in the entire society. It appears that even characters who are not in any way associated with Death Eaters have a deep-rooted prejudice against Muggle-born wizards and witches. Horace Slughorn exclaims to Harry in the *Half-Blood Prince (HBP)* that he could not believe that Lily was a Muggle-born when she became his student, since her magical abilities were so good that he had at first thought that she must be pure-blood. This implies that the general opinion among pure-blood wizards is that Muggle-borns are not naturally gifted at magic.

In *The Chamber of Secrets* Draco calls Hermione with the slur "Mudblood" causing the entire Gryffindor Quidditch team to get enraged on her behalf. When Harry, who has never heard the term before asks about it, Ron tells him that it is "about the most insulting thing he could think of" (*CoS*, 114) and adds that "It's a disgusting thing to be called. Dirty blood, see. Common blood" (*CoS*, 115). Similarly in a memory scene in *The Deathly Hallows (DH)* Severus Snape calls Lily Evans a Mudblood and tells her that it was a slip-up. Lily however does not believe him or accept the apology and their strained friendship ends there. These two examples show the strength of the slur. Although blood-based discrimination like

this appears to be generally frowned upon in the modern wizarding society, it still exists and even authority figures do not always stop it. When Draco is part of Umbridge's inquisitorial squad in *The Order of the Phoenix*, he even takes housepoints away from Hermione for being a "Mudblood" and is never punished for his actions.

It is notable that it is not only the pure-blood fanatics that think of Muggle-borns as less capable than pure-bloods. For example Horace Slughorn, the potions master, is surprised to find out that Hermione is a Muggle-born, since she is so skilled with magic.

Pure-blood wizards and witches who support equal rights for Muggles and Muggle-borns are seen as "blood traitors" by the pure-blood supremacists. Sirius Black is considered to be one, as are the Weasleys. Sirius's mother Walburga Black, who readers only get to know through her living portrait is a good example of what some pure-bloods think of them. She blasts Sirius off the tapestry once he runs away from home, because he does not agree with his family's view about pure-bloods being the royalty of the wizarding world. One can also become a blood-traitor by marrying the wrong sort, even though, according to Ron Weasley, "most wizards these days are half-blood anyway. If we hadn't married Muggles, we'd've died out" (*CoS*, 116).

Karl Marx divided the society into different classes based on how they were related to the means of production. According to Hazel Chapman (2018: 51), Marx defines this division so that those who own the means of production and make others work for them are considered bourgeois or capitalists and those who have to sell their labour are the proletariat. This class system does not however work well with the wizarding society, where people are divided into different classes by other means. Even though there are for example shops in the Diagon Alley and Hogsmeade, the only village in Britain consisting only of wizarding populace, the storeowners are usually all entrepreneurs who do not hire a lot of staff (if any), as in the case of the wand shop Ollivanders. The class system in the wizarding world seems more alike to that of a feudal society, where aristocrats are on the top of the society. According to Carlos Astarita (2018), Marx saw feudalism as the pre-requisite for capitalism, as a class society where landowners exploit the peasant farmers. The old pure-blood families are much like the aristocrats in the wizarding society since their wealth and influence are inherited from one generation to the next. For example, Lucius Malfoy does not need to work because of his inherited wealth and he chooses to make donations to the Ministry of Magic in order to make himself even more influential in the wizarding community by being able to manipulate the

government's decision making. Lucius is also a part of the Hogwarts Board of Governors until the end of the *Chamber of Secrets*, which allows him to influence the education of young wizards and favour his own son in the decisions made by the Board.

Luisa Grijalva Maza (2012) discusses the *Harry Potter* series as a grand narrative of multiculturalism and liberal values. According to Grijalva Maza (2012: 428), the use of grand narrative in *Harry Potter* leads to the exclusion of the Other as a means to elevate magic. The Other is needed, but is always marginalized. The binary pair that Grijalva Maza recognizes in the series is magical versus non-magical with the non-magical being the Other. Grijalva Maza (2012: 430) claims that if the Other was annihilated, the magical would be everything, yet at the same time nothing and therefore its stability depends on the non-magical. According to Grijalva Maza (2012: 428) we are never told what the identity of the magical is, yet we assume a meaning from what it is not. Grijalva Maza discusses especially the negative portrayal of the Muggles, who are represented by the Dursley family who act as Harry's guardians after he is orphaned. Petunia, Vernon and Dudley all have external traits that make them appear comical, such as a "horse-face" or an abnormal size. They treat Harry horribly, making him do most of the chores in the house and only giving him handovers from Dudley, who is three times as large as Harry is. They also allow him to be verbally abused by Vernon's sister Marge. When Harry finally moves away from Privet Drive, Hogwarts seems like a paradise in comparison to the Muggle world. Harry is a celebrity there, and he appears to have been born with a significant talent with magic, which allows him to get to the good graces of many people.

Grijalva Maza (2012: 430-431) points out that none of the characters that are raised in the Muggle world and then leave to study at Hogwarts want to go back to their old lives. For example, Hermione Granger is nervous about starting her life as a witch, but never entertains the thought of for example becoming a dentist like her parents. Though she is not ashamed of who she is, it is clear that she would not wish to live as a muggle when the magical world is open to her. Since multiple characters make this same choice of staying in the magical rather than the Muggle world, it highlights the Muggle world as something undesirable and the magical world as enchanting.

2.2. Blood Traitors, squibs, Muggles and filthy halfbreeds

Muggles are treated in both fascinating and disturbing ways by wizards. To wizards and witches who have never lived outside of their own magical communities Muggles

seem to be from another planet entirely. They are like both children and foreigners, naïve and threatening at the same time. That is, they are the Other. Wizards feel pity for the fact that Muggles cannot use magic in their chores and they are amazed because they still manage to survive.

In the *Goblet of Fire* Harry notices how wizards who try to pass as Muggles wear peculiar clothing choices, such as ladies' nightgowns. Even though it seems that many wizards do wear robes as their regular clothes it feels like this is an implausible detail, as one would imagine that at least half-blood wizards would sometimes dress in the Muggle way. It would seem unrealistic that wizards and witches would not be able to deduce what, for example, jeans are. Nevertheless, this masquerading and the constant struggle that wizards have with handling Muggle currency show that the two worlds, though liminal, are still separate enough for it to feel as though the Muggle Britain is another country. In fact, Muggle studies is an elective at Hogwarts. The classes revolve around learning about Muggle culture and history and the subject is aimed mostly toward pure- and half-blood students who have not had contact with Muggles.

The Minister of Magic keeps in touch with the Muggle Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is one of the only Muggles who is allowed to know about the wizarding world. They are even assigned with an auror guard by the Ministry of Magic, when tensions in the wizarding world rise and the Muggle world begins to get involved in the conflicts. The Prime Minister is one of the most influential Muggles in the Muggle Britain, yet he does not have power in the wizarding world. He is notified when events become dangerous to Muggles, but he does not have a say in wizarding politics.

Muggles are being sheltered from the wizarding world. According to Hagrid, this is because otherwise they would be bothering the wizards with requests for magical help with trivial matters all the time. What is more, there are references to the witch hunts during earlier centuries when the wizards still lived aside the Muggles.

Just as there are Muggle-born wizards, there are also children, who are born into pure-blood or half-blood families that exhibit no signs of magic whatsoever despite of their heritage. These people are called "Squibs" and they often struggle with their identities. Squibs are scorned in pure-blood circles and they are seldom mentioned. Ron Weasley tells Harry that he thinks there is an accountant in their family, but he is never really spoken of, which shows that even in the more tolerant families Squibs are seen as a source of shame. Argus Filch, the caretaker of Hogwarts, is a Squib and in the *Chamber of Secrets* he has attempted to fix his

situation by ordering self-help books to no avail. He has therefore become bitter through living and working in an institute that focuses purely on learning magic. One of Harry's neighbours, Mrs Figg is also a Squib and she has chosen to live among Muggles instead of having to face the discrimination of the wizarding society, where she apparently has no place to turn to. Mrs Figg does have a connection to the wizarding society in working for the Order of the Phoenix, but no other links are mentioned.

It is not only Squibs who are being scorned in the pure-blood society. Sometimes it is the other pure-bloods with "wrong" attitudes. Arthur Weasley is called a blood-traitor by those supporting the Death Eater agenda for considering Muggles to be people and being interested in their objects. Sirius Black is also considered one. Moreover, Rubeus Hagrid and Remus Lupin are called half-breeds because of their genes. Hagrid's mother was a giantess and Lupin is a werewolf. Overall it seems that everyone who does not in some way conform to the pure-blood ideals is bound to be targeted.

2.3. The Rights and discrimination of Magical Creatures

The *Harry Potter* series contains several different magical entities, some which are humanlike in their intelligence and others that are closer to animals. Wizards and witches keep some of them as pets, of which some of the more noticeable ones such as dragons live in conservation areas and others are integrated into the wizarding society. The Ministry of Magic has a Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures, under which the Goblin Liaison Office, Pest Advisory Board, as well as Beast-, Being- and Spirit Divisions operate.

Out of all creatures presented in the *Harry Potter* novels, *house-elves* are the ones that have attracted the most scholarly interest. They are sentient magical creatures with vaguely humanoid features that apparently only exist in servitude of wizarding households at the time of the story. They dress themselves in pillowcases or towels and have floppy ears and huge eyes. House-elves are considered to be a status symbol. In *Chamber of Secrets* when Harry and his friends are attempting to find out where the house-elf Dobby has come from, George Weasley says that "House-elves come with big old manors and castles and places like that, you wouldn't catch one in our house..." (31). They are inherited and generations of house-elves work for the same family. It is considered to be shameful for a house-elf to change their master,

as is shown in the case of Winky, the house-elf of Bartemius Crouch, which gets expelled from her duties due to causing shame to her master and ends up as an alcoholic.

Jen Harrison (2018: 331) claims that “Wand access lies at the heart of the wizarding attempt to control house-elves”. According to Harrison (2018: 331) only creatures that are bodily similar to humans pose threat onto the ontological hierarchy of the magical world and are therefore deprived of the chance to practise more powerful magic with the help of a wand. Still, critics most prevalently read the house-elves as an allusion to slavery in the United States, a comparison that has got a solid ground. Interestingly, however, Hall (2011) notes that there is another way of reading the house-elves. She suggests that since Rowling is a British author, it may also be likely that the house-elves can be compared with servants in a class society (Hall 2011: 79-80).

Hermione creates an organisation called S.P.E.W. or the Society for the Promotion of Elfish Welfare. The goal of the society is to release house-elves from their servitude and to gain better rights for them, including fair wages and trying to get a representative for the elves in the Ministry of Magic. These goals seem noble and reasonable at first glance, yet most of the wizards that come across the society are reluctant to take any part in what Hermione has planned. Ron tells her straight up that “They like being enslaved” (*GoF*, 399). His point of view is that of a pure-blood wizard, alike to that of a white slave owner. Unlike Harry and Hermione, Ron sees nothing strange or wrong about house-elves being enslaved to a wizarding family. Rather, he wishes to have one, because it would be so useful.

House-elves can be relieved from their servitude, if their master gives them a piece of clothing. Hermione attempts to do so by knitting hats for the house-elves of Hogwarts that she leaves lying around in the Gryffindor Tower, hidden under piles of rubbish. Ron criticises her, pointing out that “That's not on, said Ron angrily. ‘You’re trying to trick them into picking up the hats. You're setting them free when they might not want to be free’” (*OoP*, 230). While Hermione violently disagrees, it turns out that Ron is correct and the house-elves stop taking care of the common areas in the Gryffindor Tower, because they find the hats and socks insulting. Scholz (2018: 128-129) points out that Hermione has no dialogue with the house-elves, and that because she ignores their desires, she ends up creating a monologue that is its own form of oppression. Scholz (2018: 128-129) also discusses how

the oppressed can easily become the oppressors, either while remaining the oppressed, during the process of liberation, or after liberation. Kreacher’s

oppression is something he seemingly welcomes, graciously accepting his role to the noble and most ancient House of Black, feeling that it gives him a sense of power over lesser wizards, despite his own lower-class status based on his species.

What is more, house-elves have their own special form of powerful, wandless magic. It works differently from the way the magic that the wizards use does. Kreacher in *Deathly Hallows*, for example, is able to save himself from the cave where Voldemort kept one of his horcruxes, Slytherin's medallion, by apparating away. Meanwhile his master Regulus Black could not get away because of the enchantment preventing disappearance and died. Kreacher explains that "The house-elf's highest law is his master's bidding" (DH 161) and therefore because Regulus has ordered him to go home, his magic was able to overcome the limitations of wizard's magic. Ron also points out that the elves in Hogwarts can behave likewise, apparating and disappearing in a place that is warded against it. Another example of the power of a house-elf's magic is Winky, who is able to bind Barty Crouch Junior to herself so that he is not able to escape from under his father's eye despite of being a lot smaller than Barty.

Interestingly house-elves are not only thought of as lower beings by wizards, but also by goblins, as is shown in the *Deathly Hallows*, where a goblin called Gornuk claims that he is on the run, as he does not wish to conduct duties below his dignity, since according to his own words "I am not a house-elf" (DH 244). It is also likely that the centaurs do not hold them in high regard as they themselves would not even agree to let a human being who was in danger to ride on their back in the *Philosopher's Stone*, since they find it humiliating. This shows that the house-elves are of lower status even among the magical creatures.

Goblins take care of the main wizarding bank, Gringotts, which is situated in London on the wizarding main street Diagon Alley. They have a glum history with the wizards, with Harry's history books mentioning several bloody uprisings against the wizarding community. Some critics have compared the goblins with Jews, basing this allegory on their association with gold, as well as their shrewd features. Unlike the house-elves that are seemingly completely bound to their enslavers and have no culture to speak of, the goblins have their own language Gobbledegook and they are known for their excellent skills in blacksmithing and jewellery. One of the most important items in the series, the sword of Gryffindor, is goblin made. They also produce all of the coins that are used by the wizards. Like the house-elves, the goblins have their own form of magic and they are not allowed to possess wands.

Bill Weasley, who has worked in Gringotts and is very familiar with goblins, warns Harry about making deals with goblins saying:

“We are talking about a different breed of being. Dealings between wizards and goblins have been fraught for centuries... There has been fault on both sides, I would never claim that wizards have been innocent. However, there is a belief among some goblins, and those at Gringotts are perhaps most prone to it, that wizards cannot be trusted in matters of gold and treasure, that they have no respect for goblin ownership.” (*DH*, 417-418)

Even though the goblins are involved in running one of the most important organisations in the wizarding world, they do not seem to concern themselves with the wizard politics unless they are directly involving them. This is shown in the *Deathly Hallows*, where the goblins themselves profess that “We take no sides. This is a wizards’ war” (*DH*, 243). They remain on the edge of the society, not quite separate from it, but never entirely included either. Bill’s comment that “there has been fault on both sides” (*DH*, 417) is interpreted by Cantrell (2011: 199) to suggest that “the legacies of colonization, servitude and slavery continue to haunt the wizarding world as much as they do our own”.

Another group of sentient creatures that lives on the edge of humanity is the *centaurs*. It is mentioned that even though there is a Centaur Liaison office in the Ministry of Magic, its services have never been used. Whereas the goblins regularly have contact with the humans, however hostile that contact may be, the centaurs appear to usually avoid dealing with wizards. Even if Harry has some positive encounters with the centaur population that lives in the Forbidden Forest, the centaurs do not think much of wizards and appear to be more invested with celestial matters. In the *Order of the Phoenix* Dumbledore hires the centaur Firenze as the Divination teacher. He gets shunned by the other centaurs and banished from his herd, who think he should not meddle with human affairs. Centaurs only involve themselves with humans if they think that the stars want them to do so, because it is destined to be. Dolores Umbridge gets stolen away by the centaurs in the end of the *Order of the Phoenix*.

The *giants* live very separately from the wizarding society. They are however associated with the dark arts as it is mentioned that they have been part of Voldemort’s forces in times of conflicts. One of the most affable characters in the series, Hagrid the groundskeeper, is a half-giant. His mother was a giant and his father a wizard. Hagrid faces prejudice because of his heritage, since once it is revealed people are quick to associate him with violent tendencies. Umbridge is especially keen on expelling him because of his roots. Another half-

giant, Madame Maxime, the headmistress of Beauxbatons Academy of Magic, denies all claims of her being anything else but a regular witch and says that she merely has big bones. Considering the prejudices in the wizarding world, it may be that she would not have been able to obtain her position if the truth about her bloodline were known.

Werewolves are strictly speaking not creatures, but rather wizards and witches who suffer from the chronic illness lycanthropy. Rowling has mentioned that she based their portrayal on people with AIDS. She claims that

Lupin's condition of lycanthropy was a metaphor for those illnesses that carry a stigma, like HIV and AIDS. All kinds of superstitions seem to surround blood-borne conditions, probably due to taboos surrounding blood itself. The wizarding community is as prone to hysteria and prejudice as the Muggle one, and the character of Lupin gave me a chance to examine those attitudes. (Rowling, Pottermore)

This claim has been met with a variety of different reactions among the readers of the series. It has been considered to be a negative metaphor, especially because of the existence of the character Fenrir Greyback, one of the villains. Greyback actively chooses to hunt humans not only during full moon when those who suffer from lycanthropy lose control of themselves near humans, but also during other times of the month. He chooses to prey on children and is the one who infected Lupin. Since AIDS is often connected in people's minds with homosexuality, the implication this portrayal of Greyback has is apparently meant to be insulting.

They are forced to change into wolves every full moon and to lose control of their mental faculties for that time as their wolf instincts take over and they only care about hunting humans. They face a large amount of prejudices in the wizarding society as is shown in the case of Remus Lupin. Lupin is the youngest person to have been turned into a werewolf, Fenrir Greyback having turned him into one as revenge against his father Lyall when Remus was only five years old.

Remus is arguably the best one of Harry's Defense Against the Dark Arts professors. He shows understanding of pedagogical principles, providing the students with a curriculum with a balanced amount of both theory and practice, and supports students, such as Neville Longbottom, who are struggling with their studies. He is however forced to resign after a single year of teaching, because the *Daily Prophet* publishes the information about his condition. Although Harry and other students claim that they wish for him to stay and that they

do not think any less of him because of what he is, Remus tells them that the parents of many of the students would not wish that their children are taught by a werewolf. It appears that it is usual for Remus and other werewolves to not be able to keep their jobs for very long, if the employer is aware of their condition. This is mostly because of the prejudices regarding werewolves, but they also need to take sick-leave every month, which is guaranteed to be problematic in some jobs. When Harry first meets Remus, he looks older than his years and has shabby clothes, which indicate that money has been tight for a while. Remus is also, like many other's with his condition, not able to afford the medicine "Wolfsbane Potion" that would take away the pain of his transformation and limit the damage that he could cause by calming the effects of his condition. The potion is in fact one of the reasons Remus agrees to take on a teaching position in the first place. The fact that a medicine with that much importance to its users is so expensive and hard to come by also indicates how low the werewolves rank in the wizarding society. In a society where people have affordable potions for growing back bones, the fact that a chronic illness does not get treated in most of the cases is telling. Similarly in the real world people with AIDS have struggled to get proper treatment for their condition.

Remus is shown to struggle with his personal relationships because of his condition. He marries Nymphadora Tonks and has a baby with her. Once he has found out about her pregnancy, he becomes regretful and guilty. Remus is afraid of his son becoming a werewolf as well and receiving the same social stigma. "Don't you understand what I've done to my wife and my unborn child? I should never have married her, I've made her an outcast! And the child — the child...my kind don't usually breed! It will be like me, I am convinced of it! How can I forgive myself when I knowingly risked passing on my own condition to an innocent child?!" he exclaims to Harry (*DH*, 175). This worry that the child will be a werewolf implies that Remus has got a deep sense of self-loathing. He refers to "his kind", implying that lycanthropy makes him something less than a human being. He also claims at the beginning of their relationship that he is too old and dangerous to be with Tonks, thus categorizing himself as unsuitable for relationships.

When Harry and his friends visit St Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries, they briefly meet a depressed man who has been recently bitten by a werewolf. Mrs Weasley is worried by the fact that he is being held among other patients, even though Arthur points out that there are still two weeks until the full moon (*OoP*, 590). This shows the general wizarding prejudice against people with lycanthropy. The man is later on mentioned to be on

his own on Christmas day (*OoP*, 613), which might indicate that his family has abandoned him because of his condition.

Based on the treatment of werewolves, it is not surprising that they are some of the people that Voldemort could convince to come to the dark side simply by offering them a false promise of a better life if they joined him.

2.4. Concluding remarks

The wizarding world is starkly divided into different sections based on blood. Wizards and witches are always considered to be superior to other magical creatures. The more magic they possess in their bloodline, the better their social status appears to be. The social mobility in the wizarding world is not as good as it is in the Muggle world. One cannot change one's blood status or get a cure for lycanthropy. Still, one of the core messages of *Harry Potter* is that it matters not what one is born as, but what choices one makes. Harry is able to befriend people and creatures who are different from him, because he knows what it is like to be an outsider. Through his point of view young readers can learn the importance of treating others kindly despite of their circumstances.

Does Rowling mean to portray a society where bigotry is a norm as a kind of a morality tale? There are heavy hints that this is what she aims for, yet some of the prejudices in the wizarding world might not be intended. As Rowling is herself a part of a society where class distinctions are still strong, the way that some of the people and creatures are treated in *Harry Potter* might only echo the sentiments around her instead of being a form of social critique.

3. Magic is Might: Power in the Ministry of Magic and the wizarding society

3.1. The power of names

"Harry. Nasty, common name, if you ask me." (PS, 7)

In *Harry Potter* power is tied to words. Wizards channel their magic through spoken spells and though unspoken magic exists, it is so difficult to master that it is not taught to the students until in the final years of their curriculum. In fact, most wizards do not ever learn to use it proficiently enough for it to be useful in their daily lives. A wrongly pronounced name in the fireplace will get one lost in the Floo Network and passwords allow the students of Hogwarts inside their dormitories. There is also social power that comes with naming things. Victoria Scholz (2018: 126) points out that "The language used in the Harry Potter series contains a lot of derogatory terms intended to oppress certain people, and this language has been passed down throughout the generations. The characters that use the negative terms are generally antagonists rather than the protagonists". The most notable one of these derogatory terms is "mudblood", the term used to deride Muggle-born wizards.

Minority groups can claim slurs that have been used against them as their own and change their connotations, just as the word "queer" has been claimed back by the LGBT+ people. In *Harry Potter* the same thing is done with the word "Mudblood". Hermione claims the term as her own by practising self-labeling in the *Deathly Hallows* (Wang et al. 2017: 78). Ron tries to argue against her using the word, but she responds with "Why shouldn't I?" said Hermione. "Mudblood, and proud of it! I've got no higher position under this new order than you have, Griphook! It was me they chose to torture, back at the Malfoys'!" (*DH*, 395). She thereby shows how she acknowledges what others think about her and her position in the wizarding society, but at the same time makes it clear that she will not let these opinions get in her way. By claiming the slur, she makes it something that she does not need to fear, something that cannot hurt her.

Lord Voldemort is known by many names, for instance, his followers call him the Dark Lord and those against or in fear of him call him He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named and the less polite You-Know-Who. His name is an anagram of his original name Tom Marvolo Riddle.

In the *Chamber of Secrets* the horcrux memory of young Riddle offers Harry the following knowledge of the origins of his new name:

“You think I was going to use my filthy Muggle father’s name for ever? I, in whose veins runs the blood of Salazar Slytherin himself, through my mother’s side? I, keep the name of a foul, common Muggle, who abandoned me even before I was born, just because he found out his wife was a witch? No, Harry. I fashioned myself a new name, a name I knew wizards everywhere would one day fear to speak, when I had become the greatest sorcerer in the world!” (CS, 331)

This passage shows both Voldemort’s hate towards his origins and his wish for power. It is not enough for Riddle to change the name that he inherited from his father, he must also be a lord, a man in position of power. Lord implies good breeding and social status, which is partly a nod toward the Slytherin heritage that Voldemort’s mother’s family has, but more than that a stark way of distancing himself from his past as an orphan.

The name Riddle chose for himself has indeed managed to leave behind a heritage of fear, as no wizard that was alive at the time of Voldemort’s first appearance wishes to speak his name even after his death. When Harry first hears Voldemort’s name from Hagrid, he has to force himself to speak it aloud and he confesses that he would rather have written it down. This shows that the superstition regarding the name has not faded in ten years. It has also been passed down to the younger generation among the pure-bloods and Half-Bloods. Ron Weasley is one of the ones that dread using the name and he claims in the *Deathly Hallows* that “it feels like a – a jinx, or something.” (DH, 225) and adds that Harry should “just show You-Know-Who some respect” (DH, 225). It turns out that his words hold some truth inside them, as during *the Deathly Hallows* Voldemort is aware that very few would dare to speak his name aloud and this allows him to place an enchantment upon it making pronouncing it taboo, so that every time someone does it, he will know. This makes it possible for him to track Harry’s whereabouts when Harry is on the run looking for the horcruxes. Shira Weiss (2012: 196) points out that since Voldemort forbids people from saying his name in vain, he assumes a godlike position.

Albus Dumbledore, who is said to be the only wizard that Voldemort is afraid of, always calls Voldemort by his name, sometimes going as far as to call him Tom. He tells people not to call him You-Know-Who, but instead to utter his name, since “Fear of a name increases the fear of the thing itself” (PS, 298). By choosing to call Voldemort by a name that he has not chosen for himself, Dumbledore is able to remind Voldemort of his time as an orphan and to

emphasize the knowledge of his past and weaknesses that Dumbledore has managed to gather even though Voldemort has attempted to hide them.

Harry himself is known by the name “The boy-who-lived”, given to him after he survived the killing curse no one else had. As Jordana Hall (2011: 76) mentions, “Harry is immediately marked as the victor within wizard culture”. He is also sometimes called “the chosen one” because of his assumed destiny to be the one to defeat Voldemort once and for all. Later on in the series he however also gets several less complimentary nicknames. At school, several of the Slytherins and the poltergeist Peeves call him Potty to make fun of him. The Ministry of Magic labels him the Undesirable No. 1 once it has fallen under Voldemort’s control, thus using propaganda to paint him as an enemy of the people. *The Daily Prophet* calls him the Boy Who Lied in their articles, since they do not believe Harry’s claim that Voldemort has been resurrected.

In the Muggle world Harry is regularly denied any name at all. The Dursley’s most often address him as “boy” or “you”, indicating that Harry’s personality is irrelevant. Thus, he is being dehumanized. In the case of Vernon Dursley’s sister Marge, Harry is even put below animals, as even though the Dursleys discuss her bulldog by his name, Harry is only referred to as “boy” and his breeding is discussed in a derogatory manner at the dinner table. Hall (2011:78) claims that “The ritual abuse and degradation of the hero effectively other Harry, abjecting him from both worlds so that he might empathize with those society continues to abject”. Since he is talked about in an insulting manner in both the Muggle and the magical world, Harry is able to relate to others that are not respected, from Luna “Looney” Lovegood to the house-elf Dobby.

3.2. The era of Grindelwald: Explaining the roots of discrimination

The roots of discriminating against Muggle-borns go as far as to the time that Hogwarts was founded (and most likely further). One of the four founders, Salazar Slytherin did not wish to teach students that were Muggle-born and only accepted pure-bloods into his house. It is however not until recently that actual efforts to exterminate either them or Muggles has started. In the past wizards and witches did not hide their existence but coexisted with Muggles, so it is likely that the isolation between the two communities has provided the groundwork needed for pure-blood supremacy to spread to the society at large. Once the two

communities parted ways, Muggles automatically became the unknown and therefore threatening Other.

Gellert Grindelwald was a dark wizard that caused terror in the wizarding community of Europe around 1920s. According to Rita Skeeter, his reign never reached Britain, so his background remains slightly less known there (*DH*, 290). He believed that the Statute of Secrecy that keeps the wizarding community hidden from the Muggles should be gotten rid of. The International Statute of Secrecy was, according to the historian Bathilda Bagshot, signed in 1689 (*DH* 261). It was created in order to protect the wizarding community from being hunted down by the Muggles and the only reason that it may be broken is when a family member of a Muggle is a witch or a wizard, this occurs when Hermione Granger's parents are allowed to acquaint themselves with the wizarding world or when a witch or a wizard marries a Muggle.

It is no wonder that some wizards are eager to go against the Statute of Secrecy. It seems to be the regulation that causes the most work in the Ministry of Magic. There is an entire profession, called the "obliviators" employed by the Ministry, which only exists in order to tamper with the memories of Muggles who have witnessed magic. Their memories need to be erased or modified in order to keep the secret safe. Arthur Weasley works as the Head of the Misuse of Muggle Artefacts office. His main duties include taking care of ordinary Muggle objects that wizards have cursed to do something that may reveal their existence to Muggles should they get their hands on them, such as an enchanted biting kettle. It is also because of the Statute of Secrecy that underage wizards and witches are not allowed to do magic outside Hogwarts.

The most prominent example of the trouble that the wizards go through in order to stay hidden from the Muggles are the extreme safety measures in *The Goblet of Fire*, when the Quidditch world cup is being built and there are Muggle repelling charms all around the Quidditch stadium and Ministry officials are attempting to guide wizards into dressing appropriately in Muggle clothing. The Ministry officials have to go around obliterating the Muggle man in charge of accommodation at the site in order to not cause alarm when the visitors act oddly. In the light of all this secrecy it is understandable that the thought of revealing magic to Muggles would feel tempting to at least some part of the wizarding population.

Grindelwald wanted Muggles to become subservient to wizards. He did not show any intentions of actually erasing the Muggles from the world and neither did he discriminate against Muggle-born wizards and witches, as far as is known. Albus Dumbledore was

Grindelwald's best friend for a brief period when they were young, but ended up vanquishing him later on. In the early stages of their friendship they however shared radical views of how Muggles should be treated. Harry reads a letter from Dumbledore to Grindelwald and it begins with Dumbledore agreeing that "wizard dominance being FOR THE MUGGLES OWN GOOD (...) is the crucial point" (*DH*, 291). He writes that they will seize control for "the greater good". This is reminiscent of the so-called "white man's burden" with which colonisers attempted to justify their actions by claiming that they were bringing civilisation to the non-white, "wild" people by taking control of them and their lands. Grindelwald's message is attractive to wizards, because they spend so much time hiding their existence from the Muggles that doing otherwise would ease their lives substantially.

3.3. The era of Voldemort: The Rise of the pure-blood supremacy and its resistance

"There is no good and evil, there is only power, and those too weak to seek it."
(*PS*, 211)

The main villain of the series, Tom Marvolo Riddle, also known as Lord Voldemort began to collect followers when he was still a student at Hogwarts. Young Riddle was a Slytherin Head Boy and known to be very handsome and charismatic. He was intrigued by the Dark Arts even then and could manipulate his gang of fellow Slytherins into committing petty crimes. Having graduated, he dreamed of becoming a Defense Against the Dark Arts professor, yet failed in the pursuit and ended up working at the shop Borgin and Burges, which traded in dark artefacts and assisted him in his search for vessels for his horcruxes. From there he proceeded to become "he-who-must-not-be-named", the most frightening presence that magical Britain had encountered. Rowling (2007) has stated in an interview that "Voldemort is of course a sort of Hitler". There are several features these two dictators have in common. This chapter attempts to shed some light into the evolvment of Voldemort's reign, the rise of the pure-blood supremacy it brought with it and what this tells about the power constructions of the wizarding society.

Even though Voldemort himself is a Half-Blood, he despises all wizards that are not pure-blood. Unlike his predecessor Grindelwald who wanted to make Muggles subservient to himself but was not seemingly interested in any form of pure-blood supremacy, Voldemort considers all those with non-magical blood in their veins inferior and Muggles entirely disposable. His message is very attractive to the old pure-blood families, whose numbers had

begun to diminish by the twentieth century. There are also several half-blood wizards who are convinced by his rhetoric or fear him enough to accept his actions. What in part led to Voldemort's ability to disregard his own blood status was the fact that his mother Merope Gaunt was a descendent of Salazar Slytherin, one of the founders of Hogwarts who wished to only teach those "whose ancestry's purest" (Rowling OoP: 189). This combined with the fact that his Muggle father never loved his mother or his son, and that Tom ended up spending his childhood in a destitute Muggle orphanage played its part in making Voldemort despise his Muggle origins enough to deny them entirely.

At the end of Voldemort's first reign he hears about a prophecy, according to which a baby boy born in July, whose parents have gone against him thrice will have the power to vanquish him. There are two options for who the boy could be: either Harry Potter or Neville Longbottom. Lord Voldemort chooses to kill the one who he sees as the real threat against his regime. It may be because of Voldemort's blood status that he decides to try to kill Harry instead of Neville. Since Harry too is a half-blood instead of a pure-blood like Neville, it is possible that Voldemort saw something resembling himself in him and therefore considered him to be the bigger threat. This choice turns out to be a mistake, since when Voldemort attempts to kill the baby, Harry's mother Lily gets in the way and her death creates a protective spell upon Harry that is strong enough to make the killing curse rebound to Voldemort, thus killing him.

The final novel *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* begins with a scene where one of the Death Eaters, Yaxley tells Voldemort that he has managed to place an Imperius Curse on Pius Thicknesse, the Head of the Magical Law Enforcement (DH, 12). The Imperius Curse is one of the three "Unforgivable Curses" and it takes a hold of its targets and makes them commit whatever deeds the caster of the spell wishes them to do. Since Thicknesse has regular contact with all of the other department leaders in the Ministry of Magic as well as the current Minister of Magic Rufus Scrimgeour, having control over him means a significant advantage to Voldemort's side. The Death Eaters in the meeting at the Malfoy Manor discuss plans to take over the Ministry of Magic by using Thicknesse and later on the Ministry falls into their hands. They also take control of the *Daily Prophet*, the most significant newspaper of wizarding Britain.

Jennifer Sterling-Folker and Brian Folker (2006: 114) note that the fact that Voldemort does not wish to become the Minister of Magic signifies that the Ministry is not very powerful entity within the magical community and that true power lies only at the wand point.

This claim however rings false. It is true that Voldemort does not wish to become a politician himself, yet as Remus Lupin reasonably argues “effectively he *is* the Minister, but why should he sit behind a desk [...] Thicknesse is taking care of everyday business, leaving Voldemort free to extend his power beyond the Ministry” (*DH*, 171). The fact that Voldemort is not at the Ministry allows him to breed uncertainty and fear in the wizarding population that cannot be entirely sure of how far the events have gone behind the scenes. This however does not mean that the Ministry is unimportant in the community. On the contrary, it is the place where all of the legislation is being made, which means that controlling the Ministry is a means to controlling the everyday lives of the magical citizens. The Death Eaters may act as a fear factor to the regular people, but their rise to power would not have been as conspicuous without them having infiltrated the ministry. It is also perhaps noteworthy that during Voldemort’s first reign the Ministry was against his values and the Aurors were even authorised to use Unforgivable Curses on suspected Death Eaters, which most likely hindered the advancement of their cause notably during the First Wizarding War. Therefore the fact that the Aurors that were loyal to the Ministry become Voldemort’s pawns eased the path to his second reign.

The most notable counter-movement to the Death Eaters is the Order of the Phoenix. The Order was founded by Albus Dumbledore during the first reign of Voldemort in the 1970s and it was reassembled after his resurrection in 1995. The Order has safe houses and at least Andromeda Tonks is be willing to hide wizards that are associated with the Order. The Order members join the students at Hogwarts during the final battle against Voldemort.

According to Hanno Hardt (2000: 86) Karl Marx’s discussion of press freedom is focused on external restrictions like censorship. Hardt (2000: 89) writes about Marx’s own experiences with censorship as a journalist and how according to Marx, “press, in general, is representation of human freedom”. Once it becomes restricted, so do people’s thoughts. Hardt (2000: 89) states that in Marxist view censorship resists the exchange of ideas and opposes the public critique that is fundamental to the free press. Hardt (2000: 90) also claims that when a system of censorship is in place, the government remains blind to the real state of the society as it only hears its own voice.

The Daily Prophet is the only major newspaper in wizarding Britain and therefore vital in providing information to the magical citizens. The newspaper has been shown to be loyal to the people running the Ministry of Magic throughout the series, choosing to rather offer the Ministry’s point of view on matters rather than keep its journalistic integrity. One example

of the paper's unreliability is how Rita Skeeter, one of the *Daily Prophet's* star reporters uses a so-called "quick quotes quill" that changes the words of the interviewees into sensational titles in *The Goblet of Fire*. Despite the newspaper's questionable stance on journalistic ethics, it remains as the main media outlet in wizarding Britain and when the Death Eaters take control of the *Daily Prophet* their propaganda can be spread effectively. The subdued Ministry is able to for example suppress articles of any deaths caused by the Death Eaters and to print wanted posters on the front page. Other magazines go through similar censorship by the Ministry of Magic.

The father of Harry's friend Luna Lovegood, Xenophilius Lovegood is the editor of *The Quibbler*, a wizarding tabloid with a questionable reputation of publishing conspiracy theories and discussions about imaginary creatures. During the Second Wizarding War it is however one of the only media outlets that supports the Order of the Phoenix and is outspokenly anti-Ministry. This leads to the Death Eaters kidnapping Luna in order to blackmail Xenophilius to publish more appropriate material. Besides *The Quibbler*, the only other media outlet to go against the Ministry is the radio programme "Potterwatch" that broadcasts news about deaths not reported by the *Daily Prophet*. It attempts to question some of the more ludicrous rumours spread by the Ministry and keeps up the morale of those against the pure-blood supremacy. Potterwatch is run by members of the Order of the Phoenix and therefore remains the only reliable source of news in relation to the real state of the resistance after *The Quibbler* falls under censorship. Potterwatch is however only listenable if the listener knows the password to each episode and this limits the influence that the show has on the general population. The Ministry officials are the least likely ones to hear the broadcasts, which means that the critical voices are all but silenced in the Wizarding Britain. This is literally so in the case of the Wizarding Wireless, the main radio channel that is also controlled by the Ministry. In one of the episodes of Potterwatch, Kingsley Shacklebolt attempts to get more people to protect Muggles in the time of conflict.

"I'd say that it's one short step from 'Wizards first' to 'Purebloods first,' and then to 'Death Eaters'," replied Kingsley, 'We're all human, aren't we? Every human life is worth the same, and worth saving.'" (DH, 357)

According to Weiss (2012: 202), "Kingsley echoes the words of Pastor Martin Niemöller, who said that he did not speak up when [Nazis] came for the socialists, the trade unionists, and the

Jews, because he was none of these. But ‘Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.’”

A concrete example of the infiltration of pure-blood supremacy in the very heart of wizarding Britain is located in the entrance to the Ministry of Magic. The Atrium of the Ministry of Magic houses the Fountain of Magical Brethren, which has a group of golden statues meant to represent wizards, centaurs, goblins and house-elves living in harmony in the magical world. Once the Death Eaters take over it changes into the Magic is Might monument, where a witch and a wizard sit upon a throne made out of Muggles. This shows how little regard the pure-blood fanatics have of the lives of those who cannot create magic. The violence committed against Muggles is most often particularly humiliating, such as in the *Goblet of Fire* where a group of Death Eaters levitates a Muggle family at the Quidditch world cup, showing the mother’s underwear and making the Muggle children spin around in the air like ragdolls. They are not treated like human beings, since the alienation has worked its magic.

3.4. The power of love

“You are protected, in short, by your ability to love!” said Dumbledore loudly. “The only protection that can possibly work against the lure of power like Voldemort’s.” (HBP, 424)

From the very beginning, the one overwhelming message of *Harry Potter* is that love conquers all evil. When at the end of the *Philosopher’s Stone* Harry wonders about why Professor Quirrell was unable to touch him without feeling pain, he finds out that his mother’s love is still guarding him from behind the grave. Because Lily Potter loved her son enough to die for him, an ancient magic protects Harry from the dark magic that Voldemort uses against him. Dumbledore explains to Harry that “To have been loved so deeply, even though the person who loved us is gone, will give us some protection for ever” (PS 216). This message gets repeated time and again as the series progresses.

Love offers a chance at redemption. Severus Snape, who since the beginning of the series has been portrayed as an unpleasant and antagonistic character who hates Harry, gets redeemed at the end of the *Deathly Hallows* because of love. Snape was in love with Harry’s mother Lily and that was the reason that although he was originally a Death Eater, he became a double agent at the end of the First Wizarding War. Even after Lily dies, Snape continues to protect her son, who has her eyes. Another antagonist who is redeemed by love is Narcissa

Malfoy. When Voldemort asks her to confirm that Harry is dead, she notices that he is still alive. Yet she does not reveal this, but lies once she gets to know that her son is also alive. Narcissa's motherly love is what saves Harry for one final time and allows him to stay alive for his final confrontation with Voldemort.

Voldemort is incapable of love. He is a product of a one-sided love affair, where a desperate witch drugged the love of her life with a potent love potion in order to make him love her. The affair ended when Voldemort's mother Merope thought that the man, Tom Riddle Sr. could love her back without his potion doses, and was abandoned as a result. Voldemort went through a loveless childhood at an orphanage and never got to know love in his adult life.

In sum, Harry's ability to love is what sets him apart. He is able to face the possibility of his own death because he knows that that way he will be able to save the people that he cares about. It is also important to note that in *Harry Potter* love that is felt towards friends is just as important as romantic love. Harry's friendship with Ron and Hermione is what carries him through the hardships that he faces.

3.5. Comparisons of Death Eaters with real world radicalism and the Second World War

As mentioned in 3.3., Rowling has confirmed that Voldemort is meant to be a Hitler-like figure. The entire situation of Voldemort's second reign is reminiscent of the Second World War and this subchapter draws parallels between the Death Eaters and the Nazis.

The Nazis had a youth section called Hitler Youth where they brainwashed the next generation to continue their work. The aim of the movement was to create faithful soldiers for the cause. The members of the movement were also used as spies. In December 1936 it became mandatory for young people to have a membership in Hitler Youth and if they did not belong to it, their family would be investigated.

Similarly in the *Order of the Phoenix* Umbridge, a pure-blood fanatic, forms her own group of children called the Inquisitorial Squad. The job of the Inquisitorial Squad is to enforce the rules and changes she has made as the headmistress and High Inquisitor of Hogwarts. They are, like the prefects, allowed to take away house points from other students. Their robes are marked with a silver "I". Umbridge also makes the members of the squad help her by bodily restraining members of the student organization called Dumbledore's Army that had begun to train the students to defend themselves against the Dark Arts. All of the students

that form the Inquisitorial Squad are Slytherins. They all also appear to have positive feelings towards pure-blood supremacy, as all of the students mentioned have parents with Death Eater connections. Draco Malfoy even takes house points away from Hermione Granger for being a “mudblood” without any consequences.

During the Second World War, Jewish people in Germany were made to wear stars on their clothes in order to distinguish them from the other Germans. People were also regularly checked for their identification papers. In relation to this, Jessica Langer (2011) writes about alienation, also known as “dehumanisation” between different groups. According to Langer (2011: 83), alienation means creating pseudoscientific categories for different people, which then allow hierarchical sorting of these groups. The example that she uses is how Nazis attempted to justify their antisemitism by using questionable medical facts. In the *Deathly Hallows* the Death Eaters create a similar justification for taking away the rights of the Muggle-born wizards after they have taken over the Ministry of Magic. Hermione reads the following quote from a Ministry issued article in the *Daily Prophet*:

“Recent research undertaken by the Department of Mysteries reveals that magic can only be passed from person to person when wizards reproduce. Where no proven wizarding ancestry exists, therefore, the so-called Muggle-born is likely to have obtained magical power by death or force” (*DH*, 172).

Based on this false information, the Ministry creates the Muggle-born Registration Commission, which begins to keep a “Muggle-born Register” that aims to keep record of all of the Muggle-borns in Britain in a similar way that Nazis used to keep track of Jews before and during the Second World War. This register is followed by further measures to make sure no one manages to escape having their blood status recorded. One of the most instrumental legal changes is that for the first time the attendance in Hogwarts is being made compulsory for every young wizard. When they enrol they must give their blood status, which automatically leads to the Muggle-born wizards being excluded from any opportunities for magical education. In order to ensure that no one can avoid the new regulations, the Ministry begins to reward people for capturing Muggle-borns and blood-traitors. This leads into the group of Snatchers, bounty hunters, being born. At least one group of the Snatchers was led by Fenrir Greyback, one of Voldemort’s most vicious werewolf supporters.

After hearing about the register Ron offers to claim Hermione as his cousin in order to prevent her from being identified as a Muggle-born, though this is quickly noted as

futile since they are on the run with the most-wanted wizard in the country. It however seems likely that some unbiased half-bloods or pure-bloods could attempt to do something similar in order to save their Muggle-born friends from persecution.

Since attending Hogwarts is made compulsory for all of the students of sufficient blood status, Ron Weasley who is not attending his seventh year has enchanted a ghoul to look like him in order to fool the Ministry to think that he is at home dying from a magical sickness called spattergroit. This plot is necessary because his father and one of his elder brothers work in the Ministry and his little sister is still at Hogwarts. The Weasley family is also already under heavy supervision because they are known to have been close with Harry Potter and the subdued Ministry expects that he might attempt to contact them while he is on the run. The only member of the family that escapes this supervision is Percy Weasley who works at the Ministry as an assistant to the Minister of Magic and does not keep in contact with his family.

The students who attend Hogwarts in 1997 are faced with a totalitarian curriculum. The position of the Headmaster is taken by Death Eater twins Alecto and Amycus Carrow, who also teach Muggle Studies and Defence Against the Dark Arts. The two mentioned subjects are modified from what they used to be. Muggle Studies, which used to be an elective subject becomes compulsory and whereas it used to teach students that Muggles are not so very different from wizards and that they too have their own culture, under the new rule it is used to spread lies and create hatred against Muggles and Muggle-borns. Alecto Carrow for example teaches the students that Muggles “are like animals, stupid and dirty” and that by destroying them “the natural order is being restored” (*DH* 462). This is very much like what the Nazi propaganda used to say about the Jews, who were not considered proper human beings. The Defense Against the Dark Arts likewise becomes less about defending oneself and more about actually studying the Dark Arts so that the students can use them when they become future Death Eaters. Similarly the Hitler Youth taught its members skills such as tactical training and use of weapons so that they could become useful soldiers to the cause once they grew up.

The Carrow siblings bring back the use of corporal punishment at Hogwarts. They go as far as torturing the students with the unforgivable Cruciatus curse in detentions. The curse creates such intense pain in a person that it can, when used in high moderation, cause them to go insane.

In Nazi Germany Jews were not allowed to keep up their businesses anymore and neither are Muggle-borns, who are forced to give up not only their professions in the wizarding

community but also their wands, which form a large amount of their magical identity. The Nazis created concentration camps, where people were forced to work and where they were annihilated. Since being sent to one of these camps was much like a death sentence, there were people who would hide Jewish families in their own homes to help them escape from that fate. In the Deathly Hallows there are likewise safe houses, where pure-blood or half-blood witches and wizards agree to hide their Muggle-born friends and even strangers. Bill and Fleur Weasley for example house several people (and a rebellious goblin) in their home, the Shell Cottage.

Once Voldemort was defeated for the first time, his followers were left to face a crisis. The cause that they had supported was no longer profitable nor noble and the most loyal Death Eaters were hunted down and put into Azkaban to serve a life sentence. This caused people to make claims about having been bewitched in one way or another and therefore unable to remember the deeds they had done. According to Arthur Weasley Lucius Malfoy was one of the people who claimed to have been under the Imperius curse, which takes over one's free will and bends it under the person who cast the spell. Multiple people were forgiven their actions during the war and only the main collaborators were imprisoned. Similarly, once the Nazi regime fell the Allied governments did not publicize the cases of those subjects who had collaborated with the Nazis. The collaborator leaders were punished, but those further down the chain of command and destruction were usually not (see Laqueur and Baumel 2001: xvi).

3.6. Concluding remarks

Rowling has created a parallel world, which repeats some of the Nazi mistakes. There are several allusions to the Second World War in the wizarding war against Voldemort. Voldemort himself is a dictator with a wish to erase a significant group of people from the world. What enables the beginning of his reign are the deep-rooted prejudices the elitist pure-blood wizards have against Muggle-born wizards and the fear of the unknown that Muggles cause in wizards who do not have any contacts outside of their magical communities. If the wizarding world was less secluded from the Muggle one, it is likely that the attitudes of the magical society would be different. One of the reasons that Voldemort and his followers use to justify their deeds is that Muggles are fundamentally different from wizards and alike to wild animals. If Muggle-studies would have been an obligatory subject before it became a part of the Death Eater propaganda-machine, it would have been more difficult to convince wizards to believe justifications such as that.

4. Hogwarts: The role of education in shaping the magical society

4.1. "Or perhaps in Slytherin you'll make your real friends": The house system

Once wizarding children in Britain turn eleven they begin their magical education at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The first thing that happens once they arrive to the boarding school is that they are sorted into four different houses by a magical sorting hat. The houses are called Gryffindor, Slytherin, Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff. Each one of the houses has different traits that they value in their students above anything else. Gryffindor is the house of bravery and chivalry, Ravenclaw values intelligence and wit, Hufflepuffs are loyal to a fault and value hard work and Slytherin is the house of ambition, cunning and resourcefulness. All of the houses also have their signature colours that appear in the school robes and ties, thus showing immediately to which house the student belongs.

The house system creates rifts in the wizarding society from the moment that the wizards and witches are eleven years old. Some houses have got a better reputation than others and students are made to compete against each other in order to gain house points for their own house that can lead them closer to winning the annual House Cup. Houses also compete against each other on the quidditch field. The Slytherin students face prejudices from all of the other students from the moment that they set their feet on the school.

It would seem that the membership of a house is likely to pass down to the next generation, as is shown by for example the Weasleys who are all Gryffindors and the Malfoys who all belong to Slytherin. In some cases this may not hold true, as is the case with the Patil twins, where Padma is a Ravenclaw and Parvati a Gryffindor, but it would appear to be the general procedure. Sirius Black was the first Gryffindor in his family where people were usually sorted into Slytherin, which caused a rift to form between him and his parents. It is however probable that this tendency for families to go to the same house is not because of genes, but instead because they are raised in an environment where certain values are appreciated more than others and passed on to the children. If a child has been raised for example to believe that loyalty and honesty are the most important qualities in a person, it is likely that their value world might lead to them being sorted in Hufflepuff. Vice versa, if the family values are not something that the person agrees with for some reason, this would lead them to be a member of

a different house than their parents. The Sorting Hat also appears to put some weight on what the person who is being sorted wants to be, and therefore even if a child could have potential for another house, their own expectations and wishes to make their parents proud could affect their sorting.

Slytherin has a bad reputation. Ron Weasley informs Harry that it is the house that has produced the most dark wizards and witches. One of them Tom Riddle Jr., later known as Lord Voldemort. The House of Slytherin is also known to wish for pure-blooded students, whereas similar requirements are not made by any of the other houses. It is however not so that all of the students who become Slytherins are pure-blood, which is understandable especially considering the amount of pure-blooded families left in Britain. The longtime head of Slytherin, Severus Snape is for example a half-blood. Though no Slytherins are mentioned to be Muggle-borns in the novels, it is likely that some do exist, but they are not close enough to Harry to earn a mention. Despite the negative reputation of the house, it has produced many capable witches and wizards, including Merlin itself. Multiple Slytherin students have been employed by the Ministry of Magic. Andromeda Tonks née Black was also a Slytherin during her school years, yet she married a Muggle-born and offered her house to be used as a safe house by the Order of the Phoenix during the Second Wizarding War. When the Quidditch matches are being played it also appears that the three other houses would always rather support each other than ever be on the side of the Slytherin team (which, coincidentally is also the only house team that is shown to be playing dirty in the matches). When first year students are sorted into Slytherin they do not get applauded in the same way as people who are sorted into for example Gryffindor.

Slytherin is not the only house with a negative reputation. Hufflepuffs are most often looked down upon by their fellow students and even teachers. During the Triwizard Tournament, Cedric Diggory is chosen as the Hogwarts champion and it is said that it is the only time that Hufflepuff has done something worthwhile in the eyes of the school. When Hagrid first takes Harry to Diagon Alley, he tells him that Hufflepuffs are said to be “a lot o’ duffers” (*PS* 80). Therefore though their defining characteristics are positive, Hufflepuffs are generally not appreciated but instead thought of as simple and boring.

Since the main protagonist Harry is a Gryffindor, as are most of the central characters in the series, it is natural that readers get the best impression of this house. The headmaster Albus Dumbledore also seems inclined to favour the house as is shown with the

first House Cup, where Slytherins have already been declared winners, but Dumbledore rewards some final points to Gryffindor so that they win the House Cup instead.

The houses are further distanced from each other by the fact that the dormitories are mostly inaccessible for students belonging to other houses due to them being guarded by either passwords or riddles. This limits the amount of interaction students will have with people from other houses as the common rooms of the houses are integral in the social lives of the students of Hogwarts. Therefore the lines drawn are not only social but also physical. In the Great Hall where the students and the staff eat their meals, there are four large tables, one for the students of each house. It is only during the Christmas feast when most of the students have left the school that people from other houses mingle together in the dining room.

This separation between the houses makes it easier for bullying to evolve in the community. As the children are told from the very beginning that they are different from each other and that they should be proud of their own house, this can easily lead to shying away from people that are categorised differently from them. The other houses literally become the “other”.

The houses have a Head of House, which is one of the professors. They traditionally appear to at least some extent favour the students of their own house by for example giving them more house points and writing them permission slips for Quidditch practise. Some Heads do this more than others: Snape for example especially enjoys taking points away from the other houses. This creates inequality and hostility among the students.

In the *Deathly Hallows*, when students are using the Room of Requirement to hide from the Death Eaters, Slytherins are excluded from the room while all the other houses are using it. When the final battle begins, McGonagall commands all the Slytherin students to leave to the dungeons while the older students in all the other houses are allowed to remain and fight against the Death Eaters. Even though this is partly reasonable as at least some of the Slytherin students have parents who are fighting on the opposite side, it is also discriminatory. It shows that the Slytherins are not trusted to defend their schoolmates and that they are considered to be cowards who would likely escape from the battle anyway. Despite the brainwashing that has passed in the house's dormitory, one would think that there might still be at least a few students who would like to participate in the fighting, especially since during the year of the battle, Slytherin is the largest house.

4.2. The Quality of education

The Wizarding children begin their schooling at the age of eleven. Before that the pure-blood and half-blood children are presumably home-schooled by their parents or tutors, since they all know how to read and write as well as do some mathematics once they enter Hogwarts. The Muggle-born children on the other hand go to regular Muggle schools before they get their letters informing them of their magical inheritance.

Although other magical schools, such as Beauxbatons Academy of Magic, exist in Europe, Hogwarts is the only one that is situated in Great Britain. Therefore it would appear that almost all of the wizarding children in the UK attend it. The fact that there is no real competition for Hogwarts means that it can affect the entire magical society of the UK in a significant manner via its curriculum. The attitudes that the students of Hogwarts internalize during their schooling will reflect their views in their adult lives. It is therefore no wonder that one of Voldemort's biggest wishes had once been to take over the post of a professor at Hogwarts, where he could have affected impressionable young minds.

One of the largest problems that Hogwarts faces is the qualification and professionalism of its professors. Even though some of them, such as professor McGonagall and professor Flitwick appear to be well versed in their respective subjects and capable of maintaining an amiable and professional relationship with the classes they teach, there are notable exceptions. The most controversial teaching appears to occur with Defense Against the Dark Arts. The teacher of the subject changes each year that Harry attends Hogwarts and the same appears to have been true for decades. All of the DADA teachers create their own curricula and only two of the ones that teach Harry appear to have any idea of how to do so in a manner that actually benefits the students. Professor Quirrell is afraid of his own subject, Professor Lockhart appears to be incapable of any spells except those that alter memories, Professor Umbridge does not teach the students anything beyond theory and Professor Snape loathes his students. Professor Lockhart is a celebrity, who prescribes his own books to the students. He leaves the students alone to deal with Cornish Pixies, which while not actually too dangerous, are capable of causing hurt. He also establishes a duelling club, which can theoretically be thought of as a productive idea, but ends up as something else.

Professor Snape teaches Potions and for a short while Defense Against the Dark Arts. He is known to favour some students over others and bully others. Snape is passionate

about his subject, yet his teaching methods are in no way encouraging. He does not like to advise students while they are boiling their potions and often threatens them with consequences should they not manage to brew them in a proper manner.

Professors Lupin and Moody are the most capable DADA teachers Harry has. Lupin is dedicated to his students and makes sure to encourage them when they have succeeded in something. He keeps his office doors open should one of them need help. Moody, or perhaps rather Barty Crouch Jr., has some unconventional teaching methods, such as demonstrating unforgivable curses to the students, but he is also capable of determining the level and special talents of his students, which allows students like Neville Longbottom to do well in his class.

Hagrid teaches one of the more practical subjects at Hogwarts, Taking Care of Magical Creatures. Unfortunately, he does not have a good grasp of the level of danger that some of the creatures he shows for the students present. The safety of students rarely appears to be an actual concern for most of the professors anyway. The hospital wing sees its fair amount of use. The only notable exceptions to this are in *Chamber of Secrets*, where students are not allowed to walk the halls unescorted because of petrifications and threatening notes and in the *Prisoner of Azkaban* when it is suspected that the assumed murderer Sirius Black is in the castle.

It seems that the pedagogical knowledge that is required for the post of a teacher at Hogwarts is practically non-existent. The teachers receive no complaints for mistreating their students in most cases, as is shown most clearly with Professor Snape who regularly favours his own house during class time and makes fun of the abilities of his students, so much so that he is the worst fear of at least one of them, as shown by Neville Longbottom's bogeyman. Professor Trelawney is allowed to scare her students by predicting their death. Dolores Umbridge, who ironically is one of the least capable DADA teachers that Hogwarts has seen, makes a point about the level of education that the students have been receiving and begins to observe the other professors in order to see how qualified they are for their positions. It seems slightly peculiar that this is the first time that the Ministry has done such quality control at the institute that has the monopoly for education in Britain.

All of the fifth and seventh year students have to take standardized tests in order to pass their grade. These tests are called respectively the O.W.L.s and the N.E.W.T.s and they take place at the end of each school year. Based on the results of these examinations the students are later on accepted into the work life. For example, in order to become an auror students must have reached a minimum of five N.E.W.T.s with the resulting grade of 'Exceeds Expectations'.

However, there are cases where both of these exams have been cancelled during Harry's school years, as when in the *Chamber of Secrets* Dumbledore announces that all of the exams have been cancelled as a celebration for the threat having been vanquished. No explanation is offered about whether this actually includes cancelling the N.E.W.T.s and O.W.L.s as well. It is possible that this is not the case as there are separate examiners that arrive from the Ministry of Magic to hold the O.W.L.s and N.E.W.T.s, as well as the apparition exam. If however these exams are cancelled, it means that the students in question would need to wait an entire year for their graduation and they would most likely not be employed in the meanwhile. It could also be that the exams have simply been moved onto a later date during the summer, but this would also be slightly unfair to both students in other year courses, as postponing the exams means that the students get more time to prepare for them, and to the ones who have to prolong their studies. As for students from other grades, whose regular end of the year exams are cancelled, it seems like a pedagogically unwise decision to make them study hard for exams that will never be held.

Cantrell (2011: 198) discusses Hogwarts through Michel Foucault's term *heterotopia*. Heterotopias are invisible to those outside of their sphere. According to her Harry's presence in Hogwarts allows the Dursleys to forget his existence and the concealment magic surrounding the castle makes it inaccessible to Muggles.

4.3. Concluding remarks

This chapter discusses Hogwarts as a springboard for the wizarding society. It is the first contact some wizards and witches have to magic and therefore it functions as a formative experience that will shape the way future generations think. When the students are sorted into different houses based on their assumed mental qualities they are set towards a path of inequality. The lack of interhouse unity leads to the creation of an environment of hostility and an us-versus-them mentality.

Even though the Ministry of Magic has attempted at times to provide Hogwarts with guidelines regarding its students and staff, the school is largely ruled by its headmaster and any reforms that have been attempted have eventually failed. The state of education at Hogwarts, and therefore in the entire British magical community, varies from year to year. Staff members, while large personalities, are not always very qualified to teach their subjects. The students often face dangerous situations in and out of class during their schoolyear without the

school facing any responsibility for this. This haphazardness regarding education reflects in the society and can be considered one of the reasons that wizards are mostly content to stay in their own magical sphere instead of mingling with non-magical people. They simply do not learn life-skills that would assist them outside of the magical community at school.

5. Conclusion

Harry Potter presents its readers with a magical world that despite the escapism it offers has a darker side. The wizarding world is not without its prejudices and discrimination; it is in fact built on those features. The way that the other species are treated by wizards resonates with colonialism. The ones in possession of the most magic are in charge of the society. Creatures, whose magic is different from the one that the wizards possess, are oppressed in order to eliminate any threat they may portray to the hierarchy where wizards are on the top. If the wizarding world is put into a hierarchical order, the pure-blood wizards are on top and the Muggles are on the bottom. Since the magical creatures are seen as the Other, it is easy for wizards to justify enslaving them.

The prejudices are forced upon magical children from a young age since they are divided into houses based upon arbitrary qualities and made to compete against each other. This competitive spirit seems to follow most of the wizards into their adulthood as the peers that they find during their schoollyears remain largely the ones that they associate with in the future due to the relative closure and limited career options of the wizarding population. Harry has friends mostly from Gryffindor, with the exception of Ravenclaw Luna Lovegood.

Pure-blood wizards are getting rare in Great Britain as the Twenty-first Century approaches. This leads to borderline incest as the old families attempt to keep their bloodlines pure. Despite the fact that pure-bloods are the minority in numbers, Muggle-born wizards are targeted. This is caused partly because of the fear the pure-bloods have of being replaced. Since the wizarding world has been secluded for the past centuries, it is difficult for them to accept changes in the way that they have been living. Muggle-borns represent these changes as they have more knowledge of the world outside of the magical community and they are willing to try to incorporate their own customs with the magical ones.

Voldemort is able to gain so many followers both by using a rhetoric of fear and implying deep-rooted prejudices against Muggle-borns. His choice of name is enough to strike fear in the hearts of ordinary citizens. Names hold power both in the real world and the wizarding one. Voldemort uses his to intimidate and Harry gets called names, which makes him stand out. Harry is able to relate to the Other because he himself has been ostracised both in the Muggle and the magical world. His sense of fairness allows readers to empathise with the Other as well. Because Harry shows kindness not only to other wizards and witches, but also to

creatures such as Dobby, he is able to gain the kind of loyalty from others that Voldemort could never inspire.

Rowling planned the series meticulously, but nevertheless it is likely that not all of the details were planned. The social structures of the wizarding society resemble those of Great Britain. As Rowling is a part of that social culture herself, she might not be able to view the class structures that she writes about in a similar way as someone, who does not live in the UK and is therefore able to view and evaluate the issues from a distance. In terms of the inequality created by the sorting to houses, it is unlikely that Rowling actually meant to make readers question the fairness of the sorting ceremony and its consequences. Many of the younger readers particularly enjoy the distinctions between the houses and attempt to sort themselves.

The ultimate message of the series is that love is more powerful than fear or hate. Voldemort is incapable of loving anyone and therefore Harry's ability to love is what makes him stronger. Voldemort cannot understand why someone would sacrifice themselves for another person or why one of his loyal subjects would turn against him after he went after one of their loved ones. It is this underestimation of love that makes him unable to rise above fear. Harry was saved by the power of his mother's love in the beginning of the series, kept alive with the help from his loved ones and in the end he could choose to die for love. He understands that the love we feel toward our friends and families is just as important as romantic love, and he pities his archenemy, who has never been able to feel it.

Even though *Harry Potter* is aimed for a young audience, it has managed to capture the interest of many older readers as well. The message of tolerance, and being able to overcome one's fears and prejudices with the help of love and friendship resonates across generations and different nationalities. The wizarding world is not without its flaws, but the fact that readers can recognise those flaws once they are presented in a world that is different from the environment that they live in can allow readers to challenge the way that they perceive others in the real world.

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